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But Mr. McClellan's excuse may be that he was concerned only to analyze the formation and character of the political machine at Venice, not to write a history of public events. If this be his position, it illustrates the inadequacy of mere constitutional studies or of descriptions of governments as they exist on paper. Unless an analysis of the Venetian oligarchy be supplemented by a statement as to its actual working, we are left with only a theory, an abstraction, to speculate over. The business of the historian is to know not merely what ideals men put on the statute-book and disregarded, but what they did and what they attempted to do. A stranger from reading the municipal ordinances of Greater New York might imagine that metropolis to be the New Jerusalem, instead of a political cesspool. So conversely, although Mr. McClellan would have us suppose that an oligarchy is almost necessarily bad, we insist on asking to have it explained how the assumed bad Venetian oligarchy so efficiently saved the republic against the League of Cambray, and the Spaniards, and the interdict, and maintained that gallant struggle against the Turk.

Questions deeper still Mr. McClellan passes by unnoticed; for instance, we should like to have discussed the contrast between the stability of Venice and the political hysteria of Florence or Genoa. That would lead to a broad consideration of the terms on which any stability could be attained in Italy from the days of Charlemagne to those of Charles V. And somewhere in the essay we ought to learn how it was that if Venice was the oligarchy, and the oligarchy was detestable, nevertheless the Venetians had a beautiful devotion to Venice. Mr. McClellan has given us, at the most, a skeleton of the political development, but suppose you saw in a museum the skeleton of Bismarck or of Cromwell, how much would that alone help you to know what the man was, thought, or did?

W. R. THAYER.

Christopher Columbus: his Life, his Work, his Remains, as Revealed by Original Printed and Manuscript Records, together with an Essay on Peter Martyr of Anghera and Bartolomé de las Casas, the First Historians of America. By JOHN BOYD THACHER. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1903-1904. Three vols., pp. x, 670; vi, 699; vii, 775.)

THIS is the most voluminous and sumptuous work devoted to Columbus that has ever been published in the United States. It is not merely magnificent in appearance and proportions, but its contents are based on a more conscientious study of the original sources than has been the case with any life of Columbus published in this country since Irving's. In addition, it brings within the reach of American students considerable material hitherto accessible only in the *Raccolta di Documenti e Studi* published by the Italian government or in the Duchess of Berwick y Alba's *Nuevos Autógrafos de Cristóbal Colón y Relaciones de Ultramar*. In the preparation and publication of these volumes Mr.

Thacher has rendered to American students of Columbian questions a great service, which will be appreciated by those who have occasion to prosecute such studies. This I can say from actual use of his first and second volumes. Such use has, to be sure, revealed errors which ordinary reading preparatory to writing a review might have overlooked, but on the other hand it has unmistakably demonstrated that the work is in the main based on the primary sources.

Among the original materials for the life of Columbus which Mr. Thacher has printed, accompanied by English translations, are extracts from Peter Martyr's *Epistles*, the two Genoese lives by Gallo and Senarega from Muratori, Giustiniano's life from his *Psalter*, the various versions of the Toscanelli letters, considerable extracts from Las Casas's *History of the Indies*, the *Journal* of the first voyage, the Santangel and Sanchez letters in facsimile and translation, facsimiles and translations of the demarcation bulls, the treaty of Tordesillas, facsimile and translation of the Syllacio-Coma letter on the second voyage, the Chanca letter, the de Torres memorandum, the narrative of the third voyage from Las Casas, the letter to the nurse of Prince John, the *Libretto* in facsimile and translation, the Porras and Mendez narratives relating to the fourth voyage, and the *Lettera Rarissima* in facsimile and translation. Of these documents it may be remarked that the three Genoese lives and Las Casas's account of the third voyage have never appeared in English before; that of the *Libretto De Tutta La Navigazione De Re De Spagna* (Venice, 1504) only one copy is known and that it has never before been reproduced in facsimile.

In his third volume Mr. Thacher reproduces the most famous of some forty of the alleged portraits of Columbus, which he classifies according to types, giving the provenance of each example. To the handwriting of Columbus over 350 pages are devoted, in which are reproduced in facsimile a great variety of his autograph letters. These are all translated into English. Mr. Thacher next takes up the questions relating to Columbus's death and burial-places, and in particular the question of the removal of his remains from Santo Domingo to Havana in 1795. He decides that the remains were not those of Columbus, and that consequently his ashes still repose in the island which he discovered and colonized. Next the lines of descent from Columbus are carefully traced and illustrated with genealogical tables.

It will be seen from this brief outline that Mr. Thacher's work brings within the reach of libraries a considerable range of material often not accessible except in our great collections. In regard to the quality of the execution, it is but fair to say that one gets the impression of an alert and studious mind, exceptionally equipped in the minutiae of the bibliography of rare Americana, with a thoroughly sound instinct as to historical material, and at times a keen critical insight, yet after all lacking the sure learning of the trained scholar. Mr. Thacher sees some things that some highly trained scholars have failed to see because they have not read the sources as he has read them, and then again he makes

blunders that would be almost impossible for the technically trained student. A few examples will illustrate my point: He has discerned, and I believe rightly, that the *Historie* or *Life of Columbus* by his son Ferdinand is so demonstrably based on Columbus's own journals and papers that Harrisse's attack on its authenticity cannot stand; again, Mr. Thacher decides rightly, I believe, that the letter of Columbus which he prints in Volume III., 100 ff., should be dated in 1493, although the learned editor of the *Cartas de Indias* placed it in 1497. On the other hand, he can make such a slip and such a conjecture as the following: Peter Martyr writes in 1489 of the wide prevalence of the *morbus Gallicus*, "qui appellatione Hispana Bubarum dicitur" ("which the Spaniards call bubarus"), to which is appended the note: "This we take to be a compound Greek word βου and βαρος, 'exceeding grievous'" (I. 86). As a matter of fact "Bubarum" is the genitive of "bubæ", Peter Martyr's Latin for the Spanish "Las bubas".

Outside of the special field of Columbian scholarship, Mr. Thacher's historical studies have not been carried very far. The Calif Omar is once more condemned for destroying the Alexandrian Library (I. 15); of the Donation of Constantine he remarks, "The donation of *all Italy* by Constantine to Sylvester has been denied by many. . . . The instrument of donation is by many regarded as not genuine" (II. 86); Sir John Mandeville is still a genuine traveler (I. 171); and Adam of Bremen is said to have put the story of Wineland told in the Sagas "into a poem, a sort of cosmographical treatise" (I. 393).

The monographs on Peter Martyr and Las Casas are readable essays and bring out the essential facts as to their lives. That on Peter Martyr includes, as has been said, the principal passages in his letters relating to the New World. To the student of the discoveries Peter Martyr's *Letters* and *Decades* and Las Casas's *Historia* are of vital importance, and he is at once confronted by fundamental critical questions. Are Peter Martyr's letters genuine contemporary material of the date they profess to be, or do they also contain later interpolations of the nature of recollections and of the results of subsequent investigations? In what instances and to what extent does Peter Martyr report information gathered orally from the discoverers or embody the substance of documents no longer extant? What materials lay back of Las Casas's narrative? These questions are of the first importance for a biographer of Columbus. Then again, the scholar in reading a critical discussion wants to be put abreast of the best recent literature of the subject. Mr. Thacher rarely does this; in fact he does not, I think, give an adequate amount of credit for what has derived from the *Raccolta*, from Harrisse, and from other writers. In other cases one has the misgiving, if not the conviction, that the critical literature has not been studied.

Take, for example, the question of the trustworthiness of Peter Martyr's letters. Of all the Peter Martyr literature the only author with whose criticisms Mr. Thacher deals is Hallam. To his offhand strictures twenty-four pages are devoted. There is no intimation of the illu-

minating criticism of von Ranke, whose four pages on the subject (*Zur Kritik Neuerer Geschichtschreiber*, 101-104) would have compelled Mr. Thacher to grapple with the question in a way that Hallam did not. Bernays is referred to once and Schumacher once, but without mentioning his name. Gaffarel is quoted in relation to Las Casas but not on this problem, while Mariéjol, Heidenheimer, Pennesi, and Gerigk are not mentioned.

Again, in relation to Las Casas's famous controversy with Sepulveda, Mr. Thacher takes from Helps the statement without verification that Las Casas "occupied five full days in reading his *Historia Apologetica*, composed for the occasion" (I. 154). If Mr. Thacher had read any of the *Historia Apologetica*, he would, I think, have concluded that Helps was in error. If he had read Fabié's *Vida y Escritos* of Las Casas he would have learned that an abstract which has come down to us of what Las Casas read on that occasion proves conclusively that it was not the *Historia Apologetica* but a work no longer extant.

In presenting so large a body of translation as this work contains, from the Latin, Spanish, and Italian, and from texts not previously translated, errors are to be expected. As a whole the translations are readable and trustworthy. In any event the original is before the reader who wishes to try his own hand at it. Two or three strange blunders may be noticed: At the bottom of I. 66, "Triginta utriusque sexus" (thirty of both sexes) is rendered "thirty-six others". On I. 72-73 "Ignosce si sum brevis, et propterea obscurus" is rendered "Ignore my brevity and consequently my lucidity". In other cases the translator has lacked a knowledge of Renaissance Latin, as on I. 199, where Senarega explains the word *carminatores*, which he thinks will puzzle the ordinary reader: "Carminatores ii sunt, quos vulgus Scarzatores appellat", "Those are carders whom the world calls *scarzatores* — combers." The proper translation is, "Carminatores are called *scarzatores* in Italian." Occasionally Mr. Thacher fails to control effectively his own material. In Volume II. he asserts, "There has been speculation as to whether or not Columbus ever read Marco Polo. . . . It seems to us most probable that Columbus did know it" (II. 619); yet in Volume III. 461 he describes the edition of Marco Polo which was in Columbus's possession and refers to his marginalia in it which are reproduced in the *Raccolta*. The evidence that Columbus read Marco Polo is far better than any that can be advanced for his having corresponded with Toscanelli. On the Toscanelli question Mr. Thacher effectively supports the orthodox view.

Taken all in all, Mr. Thacher's *Columbus* is a very distinct advance on his *Continent of America*. In that work Mr. Thacher committed himself, as Mr. Fiske did, to Varnhagen's hypotheses about Vespucci's first voyage and consequently against the view of almost if not quite all the most competent critics of to-day that have gone into the question thoroughly. In no single important question in his *Columbus* is the reader likely to be misled into thinking a view to be the right one which is nearly univers-

ally rejected. The merits of the *Columbus* are positive. Its defects are in most cases of a kind that will not seriously detract from the merits. It would have been more useful if Mr. Thacher had given more references to back up his text, and if somewhere he had provided a bibliography of modern critical works on the subjects that he has treated. The index is very full and, so far as I have tested it, very good.

EDWARD G. BOURNE.

A Short History of Mexico. By ARTHUR HOWARD NOLL. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company. 1903. Pp. xi, 317.)

From Empire to Republic: the Story of the Struggle for Constitutional Government in Mexico. BY ARTHUR HOWARD NOLL. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company. 1903. Pp. x, 336.)

MR. ARTHUR HOWARD NOLL in 1890 published *A Short History of Mexico*, which is now issued in a new edition, "thoroughly revised, and with new matter". An accompanying volume, having to do with the struggle for constitutional government, has just been issued and has been entitled *From Empire to Republic*. And, at the outset, let it be said that the latter book is much more deserving of praise, though neither can claim the indorsement of the careful student.

It may seem to some extravagant for one, upon assuming the rôle of historian, to incorporate in a preface such a motto as the following: "The sources whence the information contained in the book is derived are so many and various that it would be a waste of space to enumerate them." It is also not over impressive to learn:

This brief history was prepared with the writer's own needs in view. Having accomplished what he had vainly hoped to find accomplished for him, he at first thought of offering his work to the tourists in Mexico to aid them in enjoying the sights of that country. This idea was abandoned after the manuscript was in the hands of the publishers, in deference to the opinions of others that the book would be beneficial to the public generally, — no less in need of such a history than the tourist.

Even if the author had observed greater reticence in laying down the lines within which his work fell, the reader with any knowledge of the story of the New World and of Mexico's setting in it would soon have discovered that the *Short History* more nearly approximates a guide-book. Historical accuracy and historical method are alike cast to the wind — everywhere are the earmarks of a compilation. The great drama of the unfolding of an empire is for the author only a lot of isolated pictures, the most significant of which, for the benefit of the casual reader, have been marked with stars in the manner of Murray or Baedeker. Quite apart, however, from the failure to grasp the essentials of the development of Mexico, there are historical inaccuracies of a nature and quantity to deter the boldest purloiner of historical data.

Mr. Noll, in the opening chapter of the *Short History*, which has to do with archæological matters, seized with avidity upon the legendary